MONTEREY NEWS

April 2008
VOLUME XXXVIII · Number 4

The Town

The following report was compiled by the editor from Select Board meeting minutes recorded by Inter-Departmental Secretary Melissa Noe and approved by the Select Board. (Section headings and order are the editor's.) The meetings through March 24 are covered in this report. Sue Protheroe has agreed to be the Town reporter starting in April (phew!).

Financial Matters

The Select Board met several times with Town Accountant Barbara Gauthier and members of the Finance Committee to review FY09 budget items and complete the FY09 budget requests. Select Board Member Scott Jenssen removed himself from the discussions of the Building Inspector's budget items due to a conflict of interest.

The computer budget was cut in half and it was determined that the needs of any specific offices should come out of the individual department's budget.

Gauthier informed the Select Board and the Finance Committee that there will be a special warrant article for $14,500.00 for an audit to be performed in FY09. The Boards reviewed the other proposed special articles and governmental expenses. The Highway Department will have a total of $185,000 in requested special articles. Fire Chief Raymond Tryon presented the Fire Department's budget requests. He

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BELIEVE IN PEACE
I DIDN'T RAISE MY BOY TO BE
MOURN FALLUJAH
STOP THE ATROCITIES END THE WARS NOW
ENOUGH ALREADY
IT'S ALWAYS BEEN WRONG

Joe Baker

Twenty-one citizens and three dogs participated in the Monterey Winter Soldier demonstration, March 15. The group stood in support of the Iraq Veterans Against the War, calling for an end to the U.S. occupation and for bringing the troops home.

wants a special article on the warrant for $35,000 for turnout gear. Tryon also said he would like the firemen's compensation to be increased to $25/hour, up from $20/hour in the current budget. He said the firemen average about 60 calls per year and commended them for their good work.

At the February 11th meeting the Select Board discussed the cost of living adjustment (COLA) increases for Town employees. Historically it averages 3 percent over the long term, and the Board decided to keep it a 3 percent for FY09 (same as last year). Jenssen asked if there was ever going to be a time when salaries would be capped. The Board discussed that but felt it couldn't happen since Monterey needs to be competitive with other towns to retain employees.

On March 17, the Select Board and Finance Committee reviewed all salary requests that were more than the previously discussed 3 percent increase. The Finance Committee recommended using a 4 percent COLA increase across the board for all appointed employees, which was approved. The requests for Police Chief, full-time Officer, Director of Operations, Foreman, Highway 2 member, Highway 3 member, Inter-Departmental Secretary, and Building Commissioner were all adjusted up/down from their initial request to a 4 percent increase.

The Board of Assessors have asked for a $6,000 increase in salary, split among the 3 members, due to an increase in field work because this is a re-evaluation year. The Board and Committee agreed to level fund the Assessors Elected salaries and to create a new line item called Assessors Field Work and put the $6,000 increase requested there; they suggest that when the Assessors work in the field they be paid hourly from this line item. Select Board member Wayne Burkhart said that he understands the need for the Assessors' request for an increase in salary but he also wanted to mention that Monterey has several elected boards that work without any compensation. Select Board Chair Jon Sylbert agreed with Burkhart but felt that the other boards not currently being compensated should take the approach the Assessors have: make the departmental changes needed to make the office run efficiently and then ask the town for a stipend or compensation by justifying how many hours and additional duties it has taken to get where they are. The Assessors did not want to break out the increase as a separate line item and stressed that they want to be as transparent and open about their request as possible and will answer any questions about the increase (which was lowered to $4500) at the Informational Town Meeting and/or Town Meeting.

The Overtime Supplies and Fuel budget line item was separated into 2 line items, Supplies and Fuel, and Overtime, at the recommendation of the Finance Committee.

Don Torrico, Building Commissioner, requested in writing that the town raise the mileage reimbursement from $0.40/mile to $0.50/mile for all town employees. He also discussed the new trenching regulations and additional duties that will be required.

Finance Committee member Maryellen Brown suggested that the Treasurer and Tax Collector's salaries should be equal and believed that this is how it is done in surrounding towns. The Board reviewed the survey results the Employee Compensation Committee put together from surrounding towns in November 2007 and pointed out that the two positions are not compensated equally and that the hours put in may be different. After further discussion the Finance Committee decided to leave the budget request as before.

The Boards discussed the Animal Control Officer's requested expenses increase. The ACO requested that her salary be level funded but that her expenses increase 107.57 percent (from $1,149 to $2,385). The Boards discussed the contracted services compensation being requested by the ACO for dog bite prevention classes and that she would be unable to hire herself as a contracted service. It was decided to

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recommend increasing her salary by $250 and setting her expenses at $1410.

A special article will be put on the warrant for $4,000 to hire a surveyor to survey the property surrounding the Town Beach.

Diana Piepho of the Park Commission came in to request that a special article in the amount of $7,000 be placed on the warrant to replace a piece of playground equipment deemed irreparable.

The Board confirmed with the Town Accountant that there is only one overtime rate (time and a half) and that double time is not offered.

Scott Jenssen questioned why the school's marching band wasn't given a contribution for their participation in the Memorial Day festivities; Barbara Gauthier explained that the town is not allowed to make donations.

The Housatonic Valley Association's request for money was reviewed. The town has never given money in the past and the Boards decided not to place the request on the warrant.

Property Tax Change Proposed

The Board of Assessors are requesting the following article be placed on the Town Meeting Warrant: *"To see if the Town will vote to adopt provisions of General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 54, and authorize the Town to establish a minimum fair cash value required for a personal property account to be taxed, and further establish such minimum fair cash value at $10,000, to be effective for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2008; or take any action relative thereto."* See explanatory article by the Assessors on p. 10.

Town Counsel Matters

In reviewing the Town Counsel's budget, the Select Board pointed out that several times when Town Counsel Jeremia Pollard was asked to represent or advise the town on something, he has said there was a conflict of interest for one reason or another. Pollard was asked to meet with the Board on March 3rd. At that meeting the Board asked why there are so many perceived conflicts of interest, stressing that there shouldn't be a perceived conflict of interest if Town Counsel isn't representing the town in negotiations but just reviewing or advising/assisting with wording. Pollard said he wanted to think about the hypothetical situations that were discussed before answering.

Stephen Rose

Ice fisherman on Lake Buel.

The Board did not have an issue with the FY09 budget increase request and understood the reasons for it. Pollard suggested adding a separate line item for Town Counsel expenses or additional legal counsel. Town Accountant Barbara Gauthier was asked to review this.

Pollard was asked about legal concerns about town-offered health insurance. Barbara Gauthier wanted to know if health insurance has to be offered to all elected officials if one elected official has it, or if it only had to be offered to elected officials who work more than twenty hours per week, and also if it is legal to have a Town Meeting warrant item to prohibit elected officials from receiving health insurance unless approved on a case-by-case basis at Town Meeting. Pollard will respond officially to the Board prior to the closing of this year's Town Meeting warrant. (Gauthier noted that this subject was not brought up to take health insurance away from anyone or to deny anyone, just to clarify it for future elected and reelected officials.)

Pollard updated the Board on the probate court case concerning Edith Wilson's will and said that it is almost complete.

School Issues

Deborah Mielke came in to discuss a few of the agenda items for the School Committee meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 6. She wanted to confirm that

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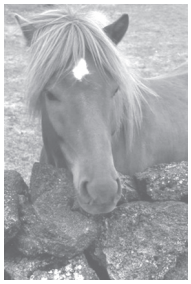

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if a motion were made to increase the budget the Select Board would support it. The Board confirmed it would support an increase. Mielke also asked the Board how they wanted Monterey to vote regarding the assessment method, and the Board confirmed that Monterey should vote for the alternate assessment method.

The Board discussed an email from the Town Clerk regarding the school petition to change the way the School Committee is elected placed at the Town Hall. The Board sent a letter to the Town Clerk stating: "We are in receipt of your email regarding a citizen petition placed at the Town Hall. The Board would like to clarify for the record that the Inter-Departmental Secretary was not responsible or involved with the placement of the petition or its details." At a later meeting the Select Board sent the Town Clerk a copy of the letter from Southern Berkshire Regional School District requesting that the proposal to change the way the school committee is elected be placed on a printed ballot for the Town Meeting.

Building Issues

The Select Board meets regularly with Building Commissioner Donald Torrico to review building issues. On March 3rd, Torrico and the Board discussed the use of trailers for storage and business use, which is not mentioned in the bylaws and therefore not allowed. Discussion centered around the possibility of the Select Board issuing permits for the use of these temporary structures for a certain time, in addition to requiring a permit per state building code requirements. Torrico suggested discussing the possibility of a bylaw inclusion with the Planning Board.

Torrico pointed out that errors are still present in the Permits section of the Zoning Bylaw. State regulations supersede the local zoning ordinance pertaining to some of our regulations and therefore our bylaws are not correct. The Select Board and Planning Board will discuss this.

Torrico reported that a $500 fine was collected from the owners of Blue Heron Landing for violations committed. The owners are working with all of the town inspectors on becoming compliant.

Torrico confirmed that the Seven Stones property was sold in late February. He performed a site inspection and the owner provided copies of building permits that were issued by a previous Building Inspector but did not have a final inspection sign-off by the Building Inspector.

Torrico informed the Board of a conflict due to his brother (also a contractor) performing work at a home in Monterey. The regulations state that only a Building Commissioner can sign applications and permits. Our current Alternate Inspector, Gary Danko, is only allowed to perform inspections. Torrico asked the Board to appoint Thomas Race to the newly created position of Alternate Inspector of Buildings/Building Commissioner for a two-year term, which the Board did.

Torrico is projecting several building projects over the summer based on recent contractor visits and inquiries.

Torrico reviewed his recommendation for the Plumbing and Gas Inspector with the Select Board; a 4 percent COLA increase is sufficient.

A local contractor complained that he had left several messages for the Electrical Inspector to sign off on a building permit and the Electrical Inspector had not responded. The contractor said that it had been over five days since he made the call. Scott Jenssen recused himself from the conversation in his role as a Select Board member and asked as a contractor what the procedure is for replacing this position. It was confirmed that the current Electrical Inspector's appointment is up for reappointment this year. The Board asked Torrico to contact the Electrical Inspector regarding the complaint.

Torrico informed the Board that Maynard Forbes, Richard Crittendon, Lyman Thomson, and Donald Torrico all recently completed a ten-hour safety seminar hosted by the Lee and Monterey Building Departments in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Labor and Occupational Safety and Health Administration

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(OSHA) and were awarded "OSHA 10" identification cards.

Police Blotter

- Burning complaint on Rockwell Road.
- DMV on Mt. Hunger Road (car was gone when officer arrived), Elephant Rock Road (due to the road washout), and near Hayloft.
- Domestic call (1am).
- Loose horse on Main Road (5am).
- Assist with out-of-control teenager on Pixley Road.
- Assist with a CO alarm for the Fire Department.
- Continuing transformer complaint from residence on Art School Road.
- Cars off the road on New Marlboro Road (pulled out by New Marlborough Highway Dept.), Harmon Road, and Brett Road.
- Abandoned 911 calls on Swann Road, Cronk Road, Mt. Laurel Way, Gould Road (x3).
- False Alarms on Main Road, Hupi Road, and Mt. Hunger Road.
- Assisted Great Barrington Police on several calls.
- Trees on wires on Tyringham Road and Main Road, taken down by National Grid.
- Report of vandalism (under investigation).
- Assisted Fire Department with a medical call.
- Loose cows on Benedict Pond. One cow became stuck in the pond and was rescued by Highway Department and Police Department (see story p. 13).
- Loose dog on Mt. Hunger, gone when officer arrived.
- Summons served on Main Road.
- Water/road/tree problems over March 8th weekend.
- Several house checks.
- Lockout on Bidwell Road.
- A resident reported an attack on her calves by either a German shepherd or a wolf.
- A concerned citizen called about people walking on the ice on Lake Garfield.
- Peaceful demonstrations were held in town on Saturday morning, March 15.
- Threatening phone call received, under investigation.
- Transformer smoking on Hupi Rd.
- A representative from DEP met with the chief regarding the transformer noise complaint on Art School Rd.

Animal Control

Animal Control Officer Nora Hayes informed the Board that she has passed the Animal Control Officer Certification course. She reported that the biggest animal control issues in Monterey involve barking dog and loose dog complaints and children being bitten by dogs. Nora feels that better communication, notification, and training will decrease these incidents and increase the quality of life in Monterey. She has started a dog bite prevention program through New England Keswick and is requesting an increase in her budget for FY09 to cover prevention and educational trainings.

Hayes said that a house pet that goes outside and has any wounds of unknown origin should go through the rabies protocol.

Hayes feels there needs to be improvement in the communications process and functions between the offices in the Town Hall.

Broadband Committee

The Broadband Committee updated the Board on the recent hearing held in Boston and on meetings they have held. The best-case scenario for Verizon putting in DSL in the underserved communities is by 2010. The possibility of Verizon being taxed on the poles in each town was also discussed (as reported in the *Berkshire Eagle*—Monterey would receive $1,500). The available technologies and their pros and cons were discussed. The Select Board said that the next step is to speak with the Planning Board about revising the telecommunications bylaws and asked for a more specific figure from the Committee of what amount of local monies would be needed along with any funds from the state and Berkshire Connect. The Committee is going to meet again to discuss future steps.

Common Driveway Bylaw

Director of Operations Maynard Forbes and Building Commissioner Donald Torrico expressed their concern to the Select Board that they were not included or asked for their opinions/recommendations

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on the Planning Board's common driveway bylaw proposal at any point in the Planning Board's process. Torrico and Forbes reviewed the proposal and both feel it is very cumbersome. Neither agrees with the proposal to make Torrico the enforcement officer of the bylaw or to have the Planning Board as the permitting authority. Forbes feels that the bylaws should encourage the permitting process with a set of guidelines/procedures to follow. He and Torrico were to submit their suggestions/concerns in writing to the Planning Board prior to their March 27th hearing.

This and That

The Select Board reviewed a letter from the Board of Health about the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission mutual aid agreement, which the Board of Health has signed and asked the Select Board to sign. The Board of Health suggested two lawyers who may review the agreement free of charge (Town Counsel has stated he is unable to review it due to a conflict of interest). The Select Board does not feel they can sign the agreement because it states that the town voted to approve the Berkshire addendum and the town hasn't done that.

Rod Palmer asked about the status of the Public Boat Ramp. The Select Board is still waiting on a quote from Foresight Land Services to perform the requested survey items. A call was made to Foresight about the status of the quote so that the Boat Ramp Committee can put it on the Town Meeting warrant for the FY09 budget. Regarding boat access on Lake Garfield for this summer, the new owners of the former Kinne's Grove property have said they will work with residents on a case-by-case basis.

David Driscoll, owner of property at 402 Main Road, told the Select Board about a tree on the property line that is being destroyed by a woodpecker. He said the tree is in the right of way on town property and should be removed before it falls and does any damage. The Tree Warden told him not to contact any tree companies to remove it because it is a town tree and the town should take care of it. The Board will ask Director of Operations Maynard Forbes to confirm it is a town tree and who should take it down.

The Board advised Melissa Noe to send out a reminder/warning letter to residences that have not renewed their yearly alarm permit, with notice of the fine to be imposed for not renewing.

The Board advised Noe to make sure each of the 5 residences that have not paid their false alarm fines has had at least two warnings regarding the past-due amount and then to let them know that if not paid in 45 days a criminal complaint will be filed.

The Board would like to dedicate the annual Town Report to Anne Marie Makuc and asked that Kathleen Wasiuk write the dedication.

Melissa Noe informed the Board of the response received from Bob Ritchie of the Attorney General's office about hosting a refresher course about the Open Meeting Law for all boards and committees in Monterey. The AGO's office requests that at least 30 people attend and suggested inviting other towns to accomplish this. The Board suggested setting a meeting time for an evening in May (a Monday at 6:30 p.m.).

Lisa Smyle resigned as the coordinator of the Memorial Day festivities. The Board asked Melissa Noe to take over the letter writing. Other people will have to be found to take over the other duties (organizing food, setting up the PA system, arranging someone to cook the food, etc.).

The Select Board created a newly appointed position, Veteran Services Officer, as required by the Department of Veterans

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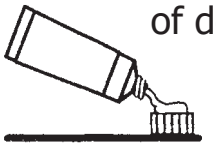


528-6520

Route 23 Monterey

Services under MGL Chapter 115. Dean Amidon was appointed to the position.

Laurily Epstein and Storrs Olds of the Monterey Preservation Land Trust discussed a proposal that Monterey adopt the Community Preservation Act, a state law that enables cities and towns to create a dedicated fund for local open space, affordable housing, historic preservation, and recreation projects. The Land Trust wants to organize a meeting to inform everyone of the benefit, featuring speakers from communities that have already put the act in place.

The Select Board submitted a fire station use request form to the Fire Department for the annual Town Meeting.

The Board sent a letter of intent to again participate in the Hazardous Household Waste program for FY09.

The Board discussed the benefits of joining the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce and agreed that it would be beneficial for Monterey to become a member. Monterey is one of six southern Berkshire towns that are not currently members.

The Board reviewed the color choices for this year's transfer station sticker.

— Will Marsh
(from Select Board minutes)

Warrant Article on Future of Monterey School

In response to a request from the School Committee and the Superintendent of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District, the Select Board has agreed to put an article on the warrant of the annual Town Meeting to see if the town will vote to close the Monterey School. We offer this as an opportunity for townspeople to discuss the future of the school and would like to hear from all concerned.

This year's town meeting will take place on Saturday, May 3, beginning at 9:15 a.m. in the firehouse. Childcare will be provided, and in consideration of parents with young children, we have slotted this as Article 5, immediately following the budget.

An informational meeting to discuss the warrant will be held on Friday, April 25, at 7 p.m., at the firehouse.

There is also an SBRSD School Committee meeting scheduled to be held at the Monterey School on Thursday, May 1, at 6 p.m., and we encourage interested residents to attend.

— Monterey Select Board

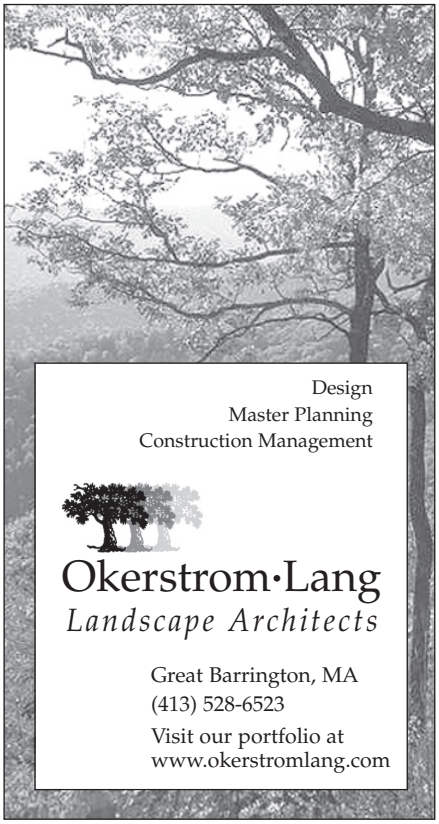
Voter Registration for May 3rd Town Election

The last day to register to vote in the Town Meeting and Town Elections on Saturday May 3, 2008, will be Saturday, April 12, 2008. The Registrars will be in session that day from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. and again from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. in the Town Offices.

Recent registrants should be sure to bring a driver's license or another photo ID showing their residence here in Monterey in order to comply with the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

If you prefer to register by mail, forms are available in the Monterey Post Office (to your left, on the wall) or on the door of the Town Clerk's office at 435 Main Road. To register in person before April 12, you are welcome to come in person during Clerk's hours (Wednesday afternoons from 4:05 to 6:00 p.m. and Saturday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.).

— Barbara Swann, Town Clerk



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May 3 Town Election Slate

Only one town officer position is being contested in this year's town election, which will be held on Saturday, May 5, day of the Annual Town Meeting. This year we are in the unfortunate position of having three open positions with no candidates, one seat on the Board of Assessors, one of two open seats on the Park Commission, and one of three open seats on the Planning Board. Candidates for the contested seat are listed below, followed by the slate of candidates for the uncontested seats (inc. = incumbent). All unopposed candidates have been endorsed by both the Democrat and Republican caucuses. Letters from candidates for the contested Zoning Board of Appeals seat are printed in the following columns, followed by an introductory letter from the only unopposed non-incumbent candidate who submitted one.

Contested Seats

Zoning Board of Appeals (5 years)
Fred Chapman (D)
Richard Piepho (R)

Uncontested Seats

Board of Assessors (3 years)
No candidate
Board of Health (3 years)
John Makuc (inc.)
Cemetery Committee (3 years)
Tom Haugh (inc.)
Finance Committee (3 years)
Michael Storch
Library Trustees (2 seats, 3 years)
Laurie Shaw (inc.)
Linda Thorpe (inc.)
Moderator (1 year)
Mark Makuc (inc.)
Park Commission (2 seats)
Bridget Krans (1 year, replacement)
No candidate (3 years, regular)
Planning Board (3 seats)
Alan Salamon (inc., 5 years regular)
Larry Klein (3 years, replacement)
No candidate (2 years, replacement)
Select Board (3 years)
Jonathan Sylbert (inc.)
Tree Warden (1 year)
Roger Tryon (inc.)

Statements of Candidates for Zoning Board of Appeals

Fred Chapman (D)

My name is Fred Chapman and I am running for a position on the Zoning Board of Appeals. I have served on this board for the past five years and have found it most interesting, challenging, and enjoyable to have participated in serving the Town.

Because the ZBA is quasi-judicial in nature, it is important to always remain cognizant of the broad interests of the Town, the unique interests of the applicants requesting special permits or variances, and the concerns of any abutters. I believe I have been, and will continue to be, fair and open-minded in balancing the various points of view set forth at our hearings. I have always worked well together with my colleagues on the ZBA, and I endeavor to ensure that our zoning by-laws and the applicable state laws are appropriately applied.

My educational and professional background is in both law and architecture. I am adept at questioning the lawyers, architects, builders, and homeowners who appear before the ZBA, and I am comfortable doing so.

Having lived in Monterey for seventeen years I have always been devoted to the Town, its residents, and its resources. Previously I served on the Planning Board for seven years, the Select Board for six years, and the Board of Health for five years.

I hope I can count on your support and please remember to vote on Saturday, May 3.

Richard Piepho (R)

I'd like to introduce myself, Richard Piepho, as a candidate for the Zoning Board of Appeals. I reside on Beartown Mountain Road with my wife, Diana, who serves on the Parks Commission. We have two sons, Judah, 13 years old, and Jordan, 9 years old. We have been in our home for the past 13 years and previous to that we lived on New Marlborough Road for 3 years. I have been self-employed for 26 years in the construction industry.

I believe the statutes and laws governing our town need to be applied. When there is an issue, reason and intent as well as the heart of the matter need to be addressed and a decision made to keep the vision of the town moving forward. I look forward to serving in Monterey, if elected.

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Bridget Krans, Candidate for Park Commission

I am writing this letter to ask for your support as I run for a position on the Park Commission. I have been serving on this committee since June of 2007. I was selected by the committee and approved by the Select Board to fill in for a previous member who could not fulfill his term.

I have truly enjoyed my year-long term on the Park Commission. During the past year I have worked closely with the other committee members to keep the parks clean, fun, and safe for the Monterey community. I worked closely with the lifeguards to ensure the safety of our swimmers and the cleanliness of our beach. New sand was spread at the beach and new woodchips were spread at the playground. We focused more attention to keeping up the ball field so that children and adults alike could enjoy the area. Also, thanks to the grant writing of Valerie Zantay we made the parks a little greener by adding solar-powered trash compactors. Currently we are interviewing lifeguards for the upcoming swim season, working on our swim lesson program so that everyone interested can participate and enjoy the experience. We are also working on revamping the playground so that it is fun for all ages but also meets all safety regulations. Skate parties and game nights are soon to come!

I have been a resident of Monterey for six years. During these six years my family and I have been huge supporters of the parks and especially the lake. We frequent them often no matter what the season and take great pride in being a part of the Monterey community. As a result I feel very fortunate to have participated on the parks committee for the past year and sincerely hope that I can continue to do so. I've enjoyed offering insights learned from my many years working with the South Berkshire YMCA, and I hope to be granted the opportunity to continue contributing to the committee. Thank you for your support.

— Bridget Krans

Warrant Informational Meeting April 25

An informational meeting to discuss the articles on the warrant for the May 3rd annual Town Meeting will be held on Friday, April 25, at 7 p.m. at the Monterey Firehouse.

From the Tax Collector

The fourth quarter 2008 Real Estate and Personal Property bills were mailed March 27. If you did not receive your tax bill, please contact the Tax Collector at 413-528-1443 x117. Payments are due May 1, 2008.

— Mari Enoch, Tax Collector

Library Recent Acquisitions

Dvds

No Country for Old Men
Atonement
Love in the Time of Cholera
The Bee Movie
Awake
1000 Places to See before You Die

New Fiction

Olive Kittredge, Elizabeth Strout
Hollywoood Crows, Joseph Wambaugh
Killer Heat, Linda Fairstein
Dead Time, Stephen White
Lush Life, Richard Price
Silver Swan, Benjamin Black
Change of Heart, Jodi Picoult
Stranger in Paradise, Robert Parker

Tree Warden News

This growing season we will be looking for places to plant town shade trees. If any of you would like a tree planted on town property that abuts your property, please contact me. We also plant in town parks and at the beach. I can be contacted by phone or email at berkshiremaple@verizon.net.

— Roger Tryon, Tree Warden

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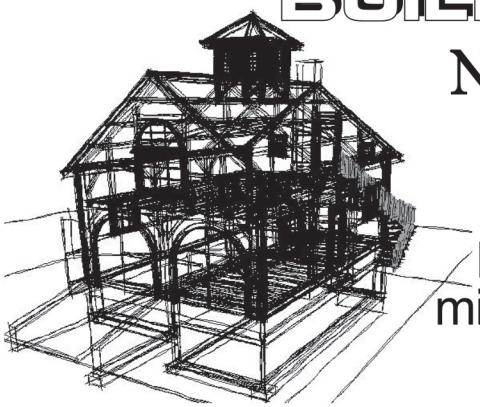
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Limiting Personal Property Taxes

There are two kinds of property taxes in Monterey: the *Real Estate Tax* based on the value of homes and land and the *Personal Property Tax* based on the value of household items (furniture, appliances, dishes, linens, art objects, etc.), farm animals, and business equipment. Massachusetts grants a sweeping tax exemption on household items that are in a primary residence. Because Monterey has a substantial second homeowner population, the exemption creates two classes of taxpayers: the 495 (second homeowners) who pay the personal property tax, and the 360 (primary homeowners) who do not. In addition, all Monterey businesses and farms must pay a personal property tax based on their business equipment and farm animals (but not pets). The total revenue collected from all personal property taxes is small, less than 2 percent of that collected on real estate. Personal property taxation has been problematic for the towns in the state because it generates many very small tax bills not worth the time and effort to process them. Consequently, the state legislature enacted a relief provision: Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 54 of Massachusetts General Law allows a town or city, if it so chooses, to exempt personal property accounts valued at $10,000 or less from taxation and to tax only those in excess of $10,000. The Assessors have placed an article on the warrant for the May Town Meeting that asks whether Monterey will enact this relief provision. Both the Assessors and the Tax Collector believe that the benefits of adopting the change far outweigh the small effect on the tax rate (less than one-half of one per-cent) that would occur.

Changing the tax structure of a town is serious business and needs to be approached thoughtfully and with good facts. In the narrative that follows we offer a concise discussion of three key issues: *the problem, the proposed changes,* and *the financial consequences*.

The Problem

There are only a few sizable personal property accounts in Monterey; the rest are very small. Of the 572 personal property accounts, the top 1.3 percent of the accounts generate 50 percent of the tax revenue, and the remaining ones are relatively small. The accounts that would be exempted if the article is passed generate an average of $25 in tax revenues. We believe that it is not cost effective to tax the small accounts. Our conservative estimate of the cost of managing all the personal property accounts is 75 hours of the Assistant Assessor's time, 15 hours of the clerk's time, and the cost of mailing a personal property forms to taxpayers ($400). When we finish our work, the Tax Collector then devotes her time and effort to converting the personal property accounts into tax bills, mailing them, and collecting the taxes. The important issue here is that we need to devote that time and effort to other, more pressing assessing/tax collecting projects that compete for our time. The Assessors and their Assistant are "maxed-out" on the time they can devote to their jobs and these other projects have languished.

The personal property accounts are troublesome from other perspectives as well. The personal property tax divides the Monterey community into two parts: the 495 who must pay the tax (second homeowners) and the 360 who do not (primary residents). That division means that the people who use the town's services the least because they are not here year round (second homeowners) are taxed at a higher rate than those who live here year round. The inherent unfairness of this situation tears at the very fabric of our town.

The Solution

By adopting the Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 54 exemption we will reduce

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TOTAL TAX BASE ($)	471,808,737.	469,556,877.
TAX RATE	**$5.10**	**$5.12**

the total number of personal property accounts from 572 to 114, a reduction of 80 percent. While this exemption does not completely solve the problem, it substantially reduces it, and at little cost to the town. It will diminish the tax base (the aggregate value of all taxable real estate and personal properties) by only 0.477 percent, or $2,251,860. If adopted, some second homeowners (90) and businesses and farms (24) would still pay the full personal property tax, because they own more than $10,000 of personal property.

The Financial Consequences

The effect of the proposed exemption is most clearly illustrated by comparing the tax base data for the current year with and without the exemption for personal property of less than $10,000. In the table above we show the real estate tax base, the personal property tax base, the total tax base, and the calculated tax rate for Monterey in 2008 with and without the proposed exemption.

If the exemption is adopted, taxes paid by those who did not previously pay personal property taxes (primary residents) will increase by 0.477 percent (the amount of increase in the tax rate). Taxes paid by those who have more than $10,000 of personal property will also increase by 0.477 percent, since the exemption doesn't apply to them. Only those having personal property valued at less than $10,000 gain a small benefit from this exemption. However the real winner is the whole town because of the increased efficiency and fairness with which it operates.

— Robert Lazzarini, Board of Assessors

Chord Sharks at April 9th Community Supper

At the March potluck supper, we had the distinct pleasure of listening to Peter Bergman, Executive Director of the Edna St. Vincent Millay Society, speak eloquently on Millay's years at Steepletop, her home in Austerlitz, New York. He also included several poems, some of them unpublished. We are very grateful to him for a fabulous program.

For the April 9th potluck supper, we are lucky to have been able to reschedule the Chord Sharks, the award-winning barbershop quartet. They were supposed to perform at the February potluck, which was canceled due to the weather. They are members of the Barbershop Harmony Society and its Pittsfield chapter, known as the Berkshire Hillsmen. You remember them from last year—they sang an eclectic mix from traditional to Beatles' tunes.

All are welcome. The next Monterey community potluck supper will be on April 9th at 6 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall of the Monterey Meetinghouse. Please bring a dish to share, with a serving utensil, and a plate and silverware for yourself. Happy Spring!

— Kyle Pierce

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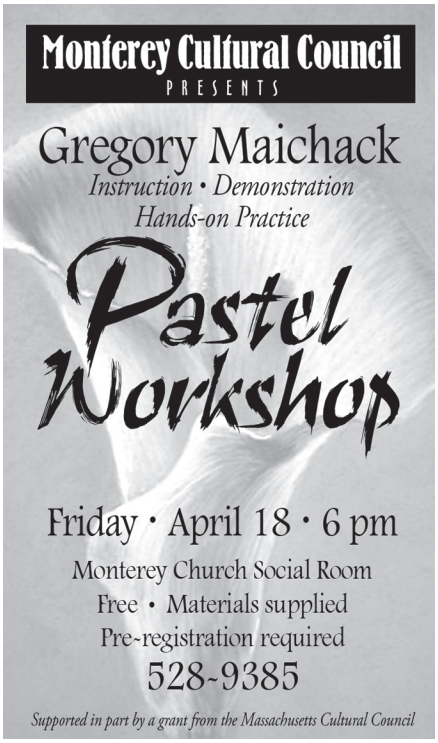

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Speaking with Gloria Whelan

As Steve Snyder adjusted the bulky speakerphone and punched in the number on the keypad, the entire Monterey Library book group held its breath. Trembling with excitement, we listened attentively as the voice of National Book Award winner Gloria Whelan came flooding into the library. Talking to a renowned author is a rare experience indeed.

For our book group, it all started when we read Whelan's *Listening for Lions*, one of the 25 Massachusetts Book Award finalists. The novel centers on a young girl named Rachel Sheridan whose missionary parents die in the 1918 influenza pandemic. Forced away from her native Kenya, Rachel fulfills her dream by becoming a doctor and returning to rebuild the hospital that her parents once operated. When Franny Huberman, our group leader, previewed the book, she noted that Whelan gave special thanks to Doctor Albert Snyder, father of Monterey resident Steve Snyder. Steve Snyder agreed to visit our book group to discuss the book and talk about his childhood in Rwanda.

Come book group evening, we had an engaging and informative talk with Steve that covered the landscapes, wildlife, and lifestyles of Rwanda, Kenya, and Africa in general. Following this, we were able to speak to the author of *Listening for Lions* herself. Whelan, a close family friend of the Snyders, dispensed sage advice for aspiring writers and outlined her inspirations in the writing of *Listening for Lions*. As the excitement died down, everyone left the Monterey Library book group with new knowledge and insight from an enriching and enjoyable experience.

— Jonah Carlson

ॐ

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Monterey Library Notes

Poetry Slam

Our first poetry slam will be on Saturday, May 10, at 7 p.m. If you are interested in reciting your own poetry you should come by 6:30 p.m. to sign up. You'll have three minutes to impress the audience and compete for fame, prizes, and the chance to go on to the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System poetry slam final! If you would like to know more about what exactly a poetry slam is, just Google "poetry slam." There's a lot of information out there. We have a veteran slam emcee coming out for this special event. You don't have to be a resident of Monterey to participate, so bring all your poet friends along!

CWMARS

We are continuing to learn how to use our new automated system — and hope you are too! Log on to cwmars.org and use the catalog. If you find something you like, request it! We'll call you when it comes to Monterey. Thanks for all your patience while we learn to maximize our use of this system. If you don't have a CWMARS library card, stop in. If you don't want to place a hold or order a book yourself, we'll gladly do it for you. Well over ninety percent of our collection is on CWMARS at this point, so you can find out from home if we have a particular DVD or book. Perhaps the biggest use so far has been by audio book lovers — instead of just having the choice of what the bookmobile brings or what has been donated, you can now browse most of Massachusetts and find audios that really interest you, in both cassette and CD forms!

Youth Book Groups

Our youth book discussion groups, cosponsored by the Monterey Cultural Council, are wrapping up another year. We are looking forward to our year-end pizza party on May 5 with the help of Kenn and the General Store. For a final activity the kids of Monterey will recite poetry — hopefully some of them will use it as a dress rehearsal for the Poetry Slam on May 10!

— Mark Makuc, Library Director

Children's Attic Consignment Sale

Save the date! The children's attic is coming! A giant two-day children's and maternity consignment sale with over 150 families selling all types of quality, gently used children's items, including spring/summer clothing (sizes newborn to 16), toys, books, baby items, sporting goods, and maternity clothing will be held on Saturday, April 12, 9 a.m.–4 p.m., and Sunday, April 13, 9 a.m.–noon (Sunday many items half price), at the Housatonic Community Center, Main Street, Housatonic. Call Community Health program, 413-528-9311 ext. 17 for more information.

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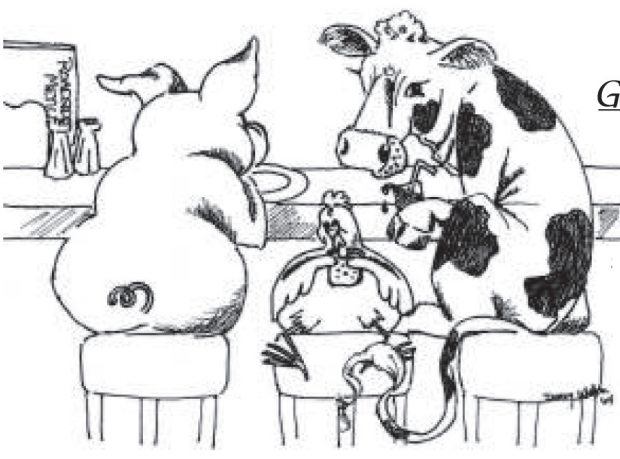

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All in the Line of Duty

Hats off to Officer Joe Dondey of the Monterey Police Department, who recently coordinated a cold water rescue on a small private pond in Monterey. In the early afternoon of February 28th, Miss Laurabelle Galloway of Blue Hill Farm and her bovine friends stepped out for some afternoon exercise, even though it was only 18º F with a brisk northwesterly breeze. While crossing a small pond in the vicinity Miss Laurabelle fell through the thin ice in the upper part of the pond and was unable to extract herself. Officer Dondey responded quickly to the report of cows running loose in the area and upon arrival found Miss Laurabelle in her unfortunate predicament. After quickly calling for help on his radio Officer Dondey then stayed with the victim comforting her as best he could.

A plan of action was quickly formulated and rescue equipment began arriving, a four-wheel-drive tractor, several lengths of chain, rope, and a length of fire hose. Miss Laurabelle had now been in the water for a while (minutes seem like hours in these situations) and was shivering from the cold and calling out in a plaintive voice from time to time. Soon though everything was in place, and with the fire hose wrapped about her and the tractor tugging ever so gently Miss Laurabelle was extracted from her would-be watery grave.

Joe Dondey

Although it turned out not to be necessary, Officer Dondey was prepared to do CPR. (Hand me those paddles! Everybody get clear!) Shivering and slightly traumatized from her near brush with death, Miss Laurabelle was led off to the familiarity and comfort of her own barn.

Officer Dondey, known affectionately to his friends as "Cow Cop" can sometimes be seen on Route 23 rounding up cows with his police cruiser. Next time you see him, tip your hat and sing along with some new words to the TV show *Cops* theme song:

Bad cows, bad cows, what ya gonna do?
What ya gonna do when Joe Dondey comes for you …

Book 'em Danno, err … Joe.

— Lyman Thomson

ॐ

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Housatonic Community Center
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From the Meetinghouse . . .

Last month, the Parish Council faced a difficult decision when Bonner McAllester proposed to lead a series of events at the church to mark the fifth anniversary of the war in Iraq and the Winter Soldier Hearings that were to take place near Washington, D.C. She had in mind to have a sign-making gathering on Friday evening in the fellowship hall followed by a viewing of the documentary made about the Winter Soldier hearings during the Vietnam era, and on Saturday a vigil on the front steps of the church and a prayer service in the sanctuary.

There were many reasons why this was a hard decision for us. One is that this is a politically charged topic, and even a partisan one, and so is not the purview of the church as a whole (though individual members of the church have a right, and even a responsibility, to participate in political processes); but it is also one with ethical and moral dimensions, which are very much the concern of the church. Another is that this is something people have strong, and opposing, convictions about, and so it might easily draw our community into conflict, though with little benefit. Related is the fact that the congregational tradition, which this congregation shares in, places the church in the center of public life, which means such a thing would be valid according to our tradition; but this congregation isn't currently central to the public life of this village (though I hope to see that change), which means there isn't an on-going and active dialogue among the church and town members to put this program into some relational context. This is to say that what might be the first word in a long and beneficial conversation—a provocative sign around the neck of someone who has something important to express—could easily become the final word in a conversation that never comes to be—one more opinion expressed in the din of expressed opinions. Also true about congregationalism is that it isn't about making its members like-minded—a process that so often becomes about creating community at the expense of outcasts; rather, it's about right relationship with God and neighbor, which calls us instead to journey all together in fellowship and faith. With this as our foundation, the fact that Bonner, though a committed member of the larger community, isn't someone who participates in worship complicated the question before us—this program was going to be in the church, and in front of the church, but not of the church.

There are, of course, many things that take place in the church that aren't of the church, a fact that pleases those of us who regard ourselves as stewards of the building. We who worship here want very much not to be the only ones to make use of the building. And we aren't. Our fellowship hall is home to the community dinners and the coffee club, whose many pictures adorn the walls like icons in a cathedral; it is also the meeting place for the Democrat and Republican party gatherings, and the Lake Buel and Lake Garfield Associations; the Monterey Cultural Council makes regular use of the space for its many offerings to the town; the Girl Scouts, Hayes Happy Dog, Sedna's Circle, an after-school dramatic arts course, and Lakefest have all made recent and varied use of the room. Likewise, the front steps have been host to the Memorial Day and I Love Monterey Day festivities and a Veterans' Day service to honor our local veterans and all their compatriots; the local bluegrass group, the Hunger Mountain Boys, used our front doors as a backdrop for their debut CD cover photograph; I've been a part of two group photos on the front steps following wedding services in the sanctuary. The sanctuary as a sacred space is one we allow to be used publicly, though with greater discernment. I'll admit to feeling a bit territorial about the sanctuary because one aspect of my call as pastor from the congregation is that I officiate whatever service of worship takes place in the sanctuary. Even still, concerts, meetings, workshops and retreats have all filled the room.

But this proposal felt weightier than most requests, and not as straightforward. So, with all these things in mind, we of the Parish Council—Steve Snyder, Steve and Sally Pullen, Laura Stone, and I (Mary Kate Jordan and Kyp Wasiuk were absent)—made a threefold decision. First, we decided to welcome Bonner's use of the fellowship hall, a decision that was the easiest to make. We decided not to have her make use of the sanctuary, which was a more complicated decision, our reasoning being that such a service was coming close to being a protest and this isn't something we want to happen in our place of worship; we felt clear that we must not violate people's need for a sanctuary from the tumult of the world in opening it up for the purpose of making a statement, however right or righteous a statement any of us might have found it to be. Finally, we decided she could stand with those who would gather with her on our front steps with the signs they all had made; signs weren't to be posted but were to be accompanied by the one whose words the sign displayed. We hoped this would help people understand that this wasn't the church in the abstract making a statement, but members of the community expressing something important for the sake of themselves and the common good.

But one more aspect of this came to me on the day of the vigil. It had been put to me earlier, when notice went out about all that was to happen. A few people who didn't think the Parish Council should have allowed this asked me, why couldn't this group use the library lawn or somewhere in front of the town offices, some officially public piece of land in the village? Why did they need to use the church steps? People would assume the church was behind this since, physically speaking, the church was behind this—behind this group that was in front of the church. I answered in terms of visibility and geography—this was simply

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the best place to be seen without being in the way. But as I sat with those gathered for the vigil I realized that this wasn't only a matter of visibility and geography; this was also about authority. This vigil against the war and in favor of peace was making use of the authority of the church.

We often hear that the church doesn't have much authority in our common life anymore, both nationally and locally. And I think this is true in many ways. People don't go to church as a matter of course anymore; those who do aren't necessarily shining examples of what it means to be human and those who lead aren't always authoritative in their own right; then there are the extreme yet all too common occurrences of abuse and malfeasance. But, even given this as a cultural context, the church yet has authority, that being the power to name what's real. The church, particularly in local settings on a case-by-case basis, still has some crucial voice to lend to the public discussion. My hope for this church in this town is that our public offering might be a setting for having such a discussion. A place where we can talk about what's important to us, a context for the communication necessary to make a gathering of individuals into a community: this is what the church as a public institution has been, and particularly the Congregational Church, which, though private in a legal sense, is, or at least could and should be, public in practice. It is this that I hope the Monterey United Church of Christ will be again, perhaps beginning now. To my mind, it's a mistake to think the church is all about converting people to Christianity; the church at its origins is a gathering of people called together to care for one another that all might have life and have it in abundance, a gathering called together truly for the common good.

For this reason, I continue to stand by the decision we made to welcome the vigil on our front steps, and I would welcome the chance to welcome other such gatherings, on whatever topic is of concern. In fact, the sign that this vigil was a success is less that the Iraq War would come to a swift and safe end, and more that we who are neighbors to one another in this small village might have renewed reason to commit ourselves to one another and a safe and free place for such commitment to become lived community. This, I believe, is what this church—your church—is called to be, and what I as the pastor—perhaps even your pastor—am called to do. Moreover, I do believe this benefits not only the small village that endeavors to be community, but also the wider world. In this hope, I invite any and all to whom the church might be of use to call on us that we might live out our calling.

— Elizabeth Goodman

Lipsky Returns from Iraq

Specialist Lincoln Lipsky (right in photo) safely returned from his deployment in Iraq in December 2007. Lipsky served fifteen months (October 2006–December 2007) with an RSTA team (reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition) in the Sunni triangle south of Baghdad with 1-40th Cavalry, 25th Infantry Division, Airborne. Lipsky went on over two hundred combat patrols and distinguished himself by earning three Army Medals of Commendation, two of those with Valor.

Lipsky was glad to get home and wants to convey his appreciation to all the people in Monterey who constantly thought of him, asked about his welfare and prayed for him during his deployment. His whirlwind trip through town was just long enough to have a wonderful dinner at Bizen, compliments of Michael Marcus, and eat his favorite omelette at the Roadside Store.

—- Maggie Leonard

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Who are you? Who do you love?

Human beings! When we meet someone new we ask: Where do you live? Where do you work? Did you grow up around here? Often we require each other to fill out forms which put us on the spot with questions: Occupation? Ethnicity? Place of birth?

For the one being questioned there are always awkward moments. We wonder if we should guard our privacy. What business is it of this application form or of this smiling stranger? How much is it safe to reveal? Socially, we parry awhile with our own similar questions until maybe we feel more secure, or find some common ground. With the impersonal application form we circle the words that best describe us, without giving away too much. Yes, I am female, though recently a child asked if I were a man. No, I'm not really under 18, though there are times I feel about 12, or 17, or 5.

We studied a little Spanish language here in my family and I learned that one does not ask "Where are you from?" but "Of where (*de donde*) are you?" This feels right to me. The question in English, "Where are you from?" makes it sound as if we start out someplace and take off from that spot, maybe never to return. On the other hand, in Spanish we are "of" some place and always will be. This could even be something we add to. I am of a certain hometown where I ran with 21 kids on a block near a college campus, and I am also of an Arizona landscape where I rode bareback all over the redrock country at age 8 and where I will always feel at home. I am of a certain grey tiger housecat, a living room fireplace, huge glacial erratic boulders in Monterey on a north-facing slope, and a beaver swamp I've known since before I could talk.

How about you? We meet at a party. You ask where I am from. Now it is your turn. Are you from woods, desert, tall buildings, a prairie town? What we want to know about each other, I think, is what do we love, what matters to us.

Last weekend at a peace demonstration someone asked my pal, "Are you from Fallujah?" She was carrying a sign that said "Mourn Fallujah." The sign was actually made some days earlier by me.

She said no. She grew up in Monterey. The guy mistook her for an Iraqi person because her skin is not white, but I made that sign because lately I feel I am from Fallujah, or in Spanish, I am of Fallujah.

Not long ago my band played at a summer party in a charming Victorian summer home in Connecticut, all turrets, porches, balconies, and blonde grandchildren. During our break I sidled into the kitchen for one of their famous margaritas. Someone had been at the font too long and was getting loud. He was for some reason haranguing his listeners about the Navajo Indians.

"What about the Navajos?" he yelled. "Who will make reparations to them? We have stolen their land, destroyed their health. Their young people commit suicide, the old folks are sick and hopeless."

His pals and neighbors looked uncomfortable, exchanged glances, rolled their eyes a little. This guy: he always has too much to drink and gets inappropriate, but we put up with him. Why? Because we feel something, we get it a little. Maybe with one more drink we too will love the Navajos the way he does. We will be "of the Navajos" the way we are also of corporate America, our lovely summer home, our office in the city. A little nudge and we will be "from Fallujah."

It is a sobering thought, enough to send us to the kitchen at break time. In the end, because we are human beings, there will be no place to hide, thank goodness. With or without the margaritas we will be of the beavers, the ladybugs, the polar bears, the redrock country, the Iraqi cities and farms, the beloved turrets, and the refugee camps. This is the human condition. We ask the questions because we want to know, want the connection.

Love. Sometimes it can be too much.

— Bonner J. McAllester

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Green Gardening Is Not Redundant

Just in: Doing good things for your garden improves its beauty, our environment, and your wallet.

Here are the "Cliff Notes" for good gardening practices gleaned from every gardening book, course, and conversation I've ever had: plant plants where they'll be happy; composting saves money and the environment; nature provides endless design tips; shrubs are our friends; and mulch, mulch, mulch,

Just as I need skiing in the winter and gardening in the summer, spring, and fall, plants need good soil and their preferred amount of light and water. That's it. For good soil, avoid gardening "trans-fats"—chemicals that promise you praise and glory—and instead, think compost. To create compost, combine chopped up leaves and food scraps (excluding dairy and meat) in a pile, stir, let sit. Voila—you get a two-fer—perfect free garden food and less waste at our dump. Cover your beds with the compost, plant sun-loving plants in the sun, shade lovers in the shade, and water them according to their needs—and then mulch. Mulch keeps the moisture in (reducing costs and plants' stress), and it lessens time spent weeding.

Steal or follow nature's design strategies. Think: meadows bursting with black-eyed Susans, goldenrod (it doesn't make you sneeze), white and purple coneflowers, phlox, and New England asters; or woods filled with ferns, shade-loving red lobelia, and assorted native evergreen and deciduous shrubs woven between and under short, medium, and tall trees; or Benedict Pond reflecting masses of mountain laurels with pink and white flowers amid pines and boulders. As for your plant choices, use native or non-aggressive plants. This results in a win-win of healthier plants and gardens that look great and can attract birds and butterflies. Caution: Don't use and get rid of invasive plants such as multiflora rose, aptly named mile-a-minute (a delicate creeping vine with white morning glory flowers), which like its friend oriental bittersweet (the orange-berry vine) strangles trees and hurts our forests.

Epilogue: Save time and money with shrubs and groundcovers. Shrubs require less care than perennials, cover a large area, and add height and texture to the garden. If your soil isn't great or your land abuts salty winter roads, try the native bayberry; it will love you. For those with very acid soil, plant blueberries; you get food and bright red autumn leaves. As your back knows, when you dig into New England soil, you find rocks. Take those rocks and edge your beds. For more savings use groundcovers. They help unify gardens and keep weeding down. In the shade, try shiny-leaved wintergreen with its white flowers and red berries, and in sun don't forget drought-tolerant plants like sedums.

To "ground" your garden, add a fountain, stone walls and paths, an arbor, and ornaments ranging from birdbaths to sculpture; then sit back with the beverage of your choice, a good book, and enjoy.

— Karen Shreefter

CET Textile Drive

On Saturday, April 26, and Sunday, April 27, the Center for Ecological Technology will hold its Earth Day Textile Drive. Materials will be accepted at CET on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. In addition, clothing may be left in the metal bin at the Berkshire South Regional Community Center at 15 Crissey Road in Gt Barrington from April 12 until April 27. Clothing must be clean, dry, and packed in strong plastic bags. Do not bring rugs, carpeting, or pillows. For more information call Amanda Dubrowski at CET, 413-445-4556.

Earth Day Open House at Hatchery

In celebration of Earth Day, the Berkshire National Fish Hatchery will once again host an open house on Saturday, April 19, and Sunday, April 20, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be displays by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Massachusetts Fisheries and Wildlife, Massachusetts Parks and Recreation, Massachusetts Environmental Police, the Berkshire Chapter of the Izaak Walton League, the Knox Trail Sno-Riders, and the These Stanley Park of Westfield.

Tours of the hatchery will be led by Henry Bouchard of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Leroy Thorpe of the Berkshire Hatchery Foundation. There will be nature hikes of the beautiful hatchery trails, a fly-fishing demonstration by Marty Cherneff and Bart Miller, and a fly-tying Demonstration by Larry Newmark. And don't miss the fly-casting contest on Saturday, April 19, at 11 a.m.!

Admission is free and refreshments will be available for sale. The Berkshire National Trout Hatchery is located at 140 Hatchery Road in New Marlborough (the continuation of River Road in Monterey).

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Epoch Barns of Monterey

The barns of Monterey that are still standing after a hundred years or so are agricultural hallmarks whose profiles remind us of a farming history that still lingers on in places along the country roads and fields of western Massachusetts.

The word "barn" itself has a linguistic origin linked to the grain barley (Middle English *bern,* from Old English *bere,* barley, plus *aern,* house) because in medieval times barns mainly served to store harvest crops that were subsequently threshed. Farmers from each of the old countries brought to this country their own style of barn, some of which are treasured monuments to Old World work ethics and might be best described today as storehouses of time.

The English style barn is usually square or oblong and often a small basic frame such as the recently reconstructed horse barn standing just below the Bidwell House Museum. The dairy barns there are long since gone, but an ancient piggery building that is indicative of the colonial outbuildings still stands not far away.

New England winters are said to have been much more severe than recent times and necessitated a sequence of connected structures such as house, wood shed, wagon shed, milk shed, and barn, all joined at the hip, so as to speak, so farmers could avoid having to face the elements while doing daily chores. This style is called a Maine or a Vermont barn, and not one is still standing in nearby New York State.

The Tryons' Lowland Farm on New Marlborough Road is a classic replica of a basement barn with foundation dug into a bank so that the stanchions for the dairy herd are under the main floor, and the heat generated by the animals keeps the upper levels warm in winter. The roof was built to last, with some twenty tons of slate to anchor the rustic structure under the square cupola, which was both decorative and utilitarian, aerating the barn in summer.

Some of the interiors of our barns, such as the more recent construction of the Gould Farm Harvest Barn, are authentic replicas of traditional post and beam timber framing and joining, not unlike the ancient inner frame of a wooden ship, with outside clapboards. The interiors of some others still have utilitarian relics from their former days, such as pitchforks, milk cans, milking stanchions, horse stalls, hay chutes, and wooden-tooth rakes.

There is a Schermerhorn style horse barn on Tyringham Road, a goat barn on New Marlborough Road, and sheep and pig sheds at Gould Farm, not to mention other chicken houses and llama shelters. The old hay barns also shelter pigeons, barn swallows, chimney swifts, and the occasional barn owl. Recently barns have been converted to human uses, and are decorated for social functions, fundraisers, and even wedding receptions.

Long ago, particularly with the Amish and Dutch, barns were decorated with religious symbols and signs, and some with a figure of Christ carved into a beam of a wall relating to a strong religious heritage brought to this land. One old English-style barn on the comer of Bracken Brae and Route 23 has found an even higher calling at Christmas, with the doors folded back during the holidays to reveal the illuminated creche of the Nativity scene, as in the carol "Away in the Manger": "The stars in the sky looked down where he lay, the little Lord Jesus asleep in the hay."

— George Emmons

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Gould Farm Gala May 3

Gould Farm's tenth annual Honors Gala will be held on Saturday, May 3, at Crissey Farm in Great Barrington. The Gala raises funds for Gould Farm, one of the oldest residential therapeutic communities in the United States, licensed to treat adults and young adults with severe mental illness.

This year the Gala is honoring David Colt. Born in 1925, David Colt was raised from birth at the Gould Farm in Monterey. His parents, Howard and Faith, were each recruited by founder Will Gould; they met, married and built their home on the Farm.

David's involvement with the Farm stretches back to a time when farming was still hand or horse powered. He recalls, "I watched with awe the scything by hand of hayfields by Farm workers, their use of axes and hand saws to fell trees for firewood needed to feed the huge Main House cooking stove and furnace, and the endless hand shoveling of snow-clogged Farm roads. Transportation memories were rides on my father's shoulders, and on horse-drawn hay and other Farm wagons."

Except for schooling and time in the Marine Corps in World War II, David lived on the Farm until starting in law practice in 1950 after receiving a B.A. from Princeton University and an LLB from Harvard Law School.

David practiced law in Boston for 37 years with the firm of Rackemann, Sawyer & Brewster. He returned to the Berkshires in 1987, becoming Of Counsel to the law firm Grinnell & Dubendorff, in Williamstown. His practice specialties included real estate, trusts, and estate planning, topics on which he is published and has spoken as a seminar panelist.

David was a member of Gould Farm's Board of Directors from the late 1950s to 2006, with one short sabbatical, and he continues as associate board member. "My most lasting impressions of life on Gould Farm include witnessing, firsthand, its success in helping guests overcome their handicaps, along with the commitment by staff and leaders to serving others. That is why I have served on the Farm's Board, and hope to stay involved in the work," says Colt.

David and his wife Elizabeth currently live in Williamstown and have three children, Anne, Stephen, and Thomas.

David will be officially honored at the Gala, during a lively evening of dining, dancing, and live and silent auctions.

Gould Farm's mission is to enable individuals suffering from mental illness to build lives of responsibility, self-respect, and personal fulfillment through a unique program of clinical care, work on a self-sustaining farm, and community living. For more information visit www.gouldfarm.org or call Madeleine at 413-528-1804.

Something Wonderful Is Coming to Monterey!

Marc and Katherine Roberts are pleased to announce that Roberts Woods Farm is instituting a program in therapeutic riding at their facility on Art School Road beginning in early May. Lessons will be conducted by Elizabeth Timlege, a Certified Instructor with the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association, an Equine Specialist with the Equine Facilitated Mental Health Association, and a Certified Instructor with the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association.

Beth works as manager of the Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine in Grafton, Massachusetts. She will be training future veterinarians in her Therapeutic Riding Program.

Volunteers will be essential to the success of our local endeavor. People with experience with horses are especially welcome to join our team led by Farm Manager Brian Puntin. Esther Heffernan will be coordinating the volunteer program. Call her at 413-644-9235 for more information. Training will begin on Sunday, April 6, at 1 p.m.

Marc and Kathyrn plan to offer scholarships to offset the costs of the program and to ease the burden on families. They are generously offering the first two individual sessions of therapeutic riding without charge. Watch for the first fundraiser and the Midnight Ride of Brian Puntin.

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Heirloom Apples

When my parents bought their house in Stockbridge in 1979, a small grove of nine apple trees came with it. Even then the trees were impressive. At almost fifty years of age, they still yielded about two hundred bushels of apples each year. But what really got my attention were the varieties. The different names might not have surprised anyone familiar with orchards, but to this suburban-urban type person we could just as well have been talking about the moons of Saturn. The varieties were Northern Spy, Rhode Island Greening, Macoun, Baldwin, and, my favorite, Sheepnose. The Sheepnose was the oldest tree, and by that time it produced only a few smallish apples. They were strangely elongated (like a sheep's nose, of course) and tasted slightly sweet. I can't say they sparked any inspiration at the time, but I never have forgotten that tree and its ungainly little apples.

So here I am in Monterey for almost twenty years, and my own property has undergone many transformations. Most of my woods are untouched, but the quarter-acre or so that includes the house has seen a) complete neglect and bewilderment for the first few years, b) the establishment of a lawn and subsequent resentment over having to mow it, c) the removal of most of the grass and the creation of many annual and perennial flower beds, and d) the removal of most of the flowers in favor of growing food. I'm having a whale of a time out here.

Self-sufficiency has really been on my mind lately. It preoccupies a lot of people at the moment, if books and magazines and web articles are any indication. It might seem that, since my business is gardening, it would be easier for me to grow food than for most people. But in fact the growing season is my flat-out busiest time of the year. Like many people I can't spend too much time in the garden. To some extent the food that I'm growing has to be able to look after itself. And that's where the apples come in.

Apples had quite a central role in early American agricultural history. No native apples existed in North America except for a few wild crabapples. The colonists brought tiny apple tree saplings and seeds with all their other supplies on their voyages across the Atlantic and planted them here. Apples were originally grown not for food but for drink. The settlers came from places where the water was generally unsafe to drink and they relied mostly on beer and cider for their beverages. Every farm had its own orchard out past the vegetable garden.

The thing to know about apples is that they are not self-fertile. Every apple tree needs to be visited by pollinator insects carrying pollen from another variety of apple tree in order to produce fruit. This means that the seeds from this season's apples will produce a different variety from the parent, every time. The only way to get new apple trees to match their parent exactly is to take twigs, or scions, from the mother tree and graft them onto rootstock. The early settlers did not have the time or facilities to take up the practice of grafting, so most of their apple trees grew from scattered seed. Over time the endless cross-pollinating led to an explosion of different apples, some tasty and many better left to the hogs. By the late nineteenth century, there were almost 8,000 varieties of apples in this country.

Apples trees live for only about eighty years, and now most of the thousands of varieties are lost to us forever. Early twentieth-century migration to the cities and improvement in transportation via railroads meant that growers had to concentrate on fruit that stored and shipped easily. Until very recently there were only about fifteen kinds of apples commonly available. Fortunately the last thirty to forty years have seen a rebirth of interest in heirloom varieties of many foods, including apples. Here in the Northeast a number of orchardists have made a life's work of finding and reestablishing some of the old favorites. Varieties like Northern Spy and Rhode Island Greenings are once again familiar names, at least in specialty food stores. We can also have these old-timer apples growing in our own backyards.

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When I started thinking about a little home orchard, the first apple on the list was that Sheepnose. And it's available! For the others I wanted to apply a little more logic to the choice. Since we have late frosts around here, trees that flower very early are a bit risky. Mid- to late-season bloomers seem like a better bet, and having at least three different trees that flower at the same time means more of a chance for successful pollination. Since this is an organic garden I wanted to avoid apples that require spraying to stay healthy. Fortunately there are heirlooms that have demonstrated some disease resistance. I settled on Autumn Arctic, Egremont Russet, Hadlock Reinette, and Black Oxford. Other good choices would include Cox's Orange Pippin, Keepsake, Wolf River, and Northern Spy. And of course there are many different reasons people choose apple varieties. For some it might be great cider, or baking, or shelf life that matters most.

One other consideration deserves mention, and that's tree size. There are many dwarf and semi-dwarf varieties now, and they may be the best bet for some home growers. But the standard size trees deserve a second look, because early and regular pruning can keep them to a manageable height. Some orchardists think the old standards are sturdier and will last longer than the compact varieties. It may come down to whether longevity is an important trait.

Heirloom apples aren't the only fruit to plant at home, of course, but that is a story for another day. For now I can't wait to see the unfamiliar shapes and colors and the memorable tastes that my little apple trees will produce as they grow.

Apple Tree Sources

Cummins Nursery, Geneva, New York. www.cumminsnursery.com

Fedco Trees, Waterville, Maine. www.fedcoseeds.com

St. Lawrence Nurseries, Potsdam, New York. www.sln.potsdam.ny.us

Trees of Antiquity, Paso Robles, California. www.treesofantiquity.com

Our own local nurseries carry some heirlooms and can help locate trees as well.

Recommended Reading

Tim Hensley, "Apples of Your Eye," in *Smithsonian,* November 2002.

Henry Homeyer, "Bareroot Apples in Your Backyard," in *People Places & Plants,* Autumn 2005.

Leighton, Ann. *Early American Gardens,* "For Meate or Medicine." Houghton Mifflin, 1970.

Pelczar, Rita, "A Taste of the Past: Heirloom Apples," in The American Gardener, September/October 2002.

— Ruth Green

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P.O. Box 9, 01245

To the Editor:

I read in the March 2008 *Monterey News* that Hughes Network should be considered an alternative for DSL/broadband access.

I would like to share with you our experience with Hughes Network, which we cancelled as soon as our contract was up. Please be aware that the customer service was not only poor, they were belligerent, rude, and indifferent. Basically, if you understand their "fair use policy," you will quickly realize that the more you upload and download using their bandwidth, the slower your response time will get. In essence, you are punished with continuously slowing speed for using their service; they will even shut you down. Please also understand that there is a significant delay due to the signal bouncing from area to area. Instead of sub-second response we received 1.5–2 second response or worse. We found that this delay increases with poor weather in Monterey as well as poor weather at the network operation center in Maryland. We generally found this service to be overly expensive for what you get and the "fair use policy" will limit you to dialup speeds. You might as well just pay for dialup until some other services becomes viable in Monterey.

— Cathy Cocco

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Green Living in Monterey
Green Syrup Marketing

We went online to check the current marketing scene for maple syrup. Dazzling. You can get it from Amazon.com. You can get it in eensy etched bottles, custom-made for your wedding guests. It can be sold as coffee flavor, shaving cream, spot remover, air freshener, axle grease, fertilizer … I'm making it up, but this is what you do, apparently. Someone really did call from slightly south of here: he's got a distillery and wants us to boil some of his sap so he can make booze.

We should print a little booklet and tie it to the neck of each bottle: "The Maple Syrup Story, from the Tree to Thee." Better yet, make our own YouTube movie and embed it in the bottle so you can watch right at the breakfast table. So much fun dreaming up advertising.

In the end we jumped on the green bandwagon with our returnable all-glass, wood-fired schtick. It's true we eschew fuel oil and plastic jugs, but it'll be awhile before we get the chainsaw and the pickup out of our production story. Our tap holes are drilled by hand with an ancestral brace that's been on the farm at least four generations, but we get our labels printed downtown, and where do they make our Elmer's glue? China, if you can believe it.

The Mahicans around here boiled the sap down to sugar using hot rocks in carved wooden bowls, and packed it in birchbark boxes with lids. This, I hope, is where we are headed.

— Bonner McAllester

Cultural Council Events

There will be lots to do this spring in Monterey, beginning with Gregory Maichack's workshop, The New Art of Pastel Painting: The da Vinci Mode, on Friday, April 18th. There is still room to preregister for this chance to get creative and learn something new. This award-winning, hands-on workshop will be held in the lower level of the Monterey Meetinghouse from 6:00–8:00 p.m., and you don't need to bring anything but a photo or other image of a landscape to work from. Instruction in beginning and advanced techniques, professional grade materials, advice and encouragement are provided for free. See Gregory Maichack's website, www.GregoryMaichack.com, to learn more about this remarkable artist and his workshops. To register call Joe Baker at 528-9385.

Mark your calendars for May 23rd and 24th when Monterey will host Rich Guthrie, a bird expert who is no stranger to listeners of WAMC radio's *Vox Pop*. Friday night he will talk to us about birds in our region and on Saturday morning we will get outdoors to see some of them.

We'll also be presenting a local nature walk with Monterey's own Bonner McAllester, Sunday, June 8, at 10:30 a.m. The May *News* will have more information.

Other events in the planning stages include a June evening discussion with film star Karen Allen, a printmaking workshop in August, and a poetry reading in the fall.

Jules Dahlman

Dick Tryon in Lowland Farm sugar house.

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Sign-Ups for Cal Ripken Baseball

Now is the time for boys and girls ages 5 to 12 (those not turning 12 before May 1, 2008) to sign up for this year's Cal Ripken Baseball League. All players are welcome, from beginners to all-stars; everyone learns and plays.

The local 15-to-20-game season runs from mid-April through June, with optional postseason tournament and summer baseball events. This is an excellent baseball experience emphasizing fun, friendship, hitting, pitching, catching, fielding action, and team spirit.

Home games and practices are at beautiful Greene Park in the center of Monterey. The league is open to players from Monterey, Great Barrington, Otis, Sandisfield, Mount Washington, Becket, New Marlborough, Sheffield, Egremont, Alford, and surrounding towns. Parents are urged to get involved. There will be activities 2 to 3 times a week for ages 8 and above, one time per week for ages 5 to 7 (using tennis balls). Attendance is not mandatory for practice or games, but players should plan to attend at least 50 percent of the events. The cost is $35 per player, maximum $50 per family, for the year, which covers uniforms, insurance, equipment, etc.

To register, send player's name, age, phone number, email and post office addresses, and parents' names to Jim Edelman, PO Box 11, Monterey, MA 01245, or email cljvedelman@aol.com or phone 413-528-0006.

Calendar

Wednesday, April 9: Community Supper, 6 p.m. Meetinghouse Fellowship hall, 6 p.m. Entertainment by Chord Sharks, a barbershop quartet. See p. 11.

Thursday, April 10: Free Blood Pressure Clinic, 2:00 p.m., Monterey Town Hall Meeting Room.

Tuesday, April 15: Free Health Screening, Community Health Program, 10 a.m., Town Hall Meeting Room.

Friday, April 18: Workshop on New Art of Pastel Painting, 6–8 p.m., Meetinghouse Basement. Free. See p. 22.

Saturday, April 19, Sunday April 20: Open House at Berkshire National Fish Hatchery, 10 a.m.–3 p.m. See p. 17.

Tuesday, April 22: Earth Day.

Friday, April 25: Informational meeting on Town Meeting warrant articles, 7 p.m. Monterey Firehouse.

Saturday, April 26: Square and contra dancing, 8:30–11:30 p.m., Dewey Hall, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Music by Mountain Laurel. Caller David Kaynor. Adults $8–10, children $5. Info 528-9385.

The Observer
February 26–March 25

High temp. (3/4)	49º
Low temp. (2/29)	-4°
Avg. high temp.	38.5°
Avg. low temp.	18.4°
Avg. temp.	28.5°
Snowfall	12.4 in.
Total precipitation (rain and melted snow)	1.54 in.

Precipitation occurred on 18 days.

Contributors

We thank the following folks for their recent contributions.

C. Snow
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Duke
Elizabeth Thorn
Nancy Kalodner
Erwin & May Clark
Berkshire Hatchery Foundation
Eleanor Kimberley

Thursday, May 1: SBRSD School Committee meeting, Monterey School, May 1, 6 p.m. Everyone invited; future of Monterey School will be discussed.

Sat., May 3: Town Meeting Firehouse.

LT HOME reopens September 29th in Sandisfield!
Shop in a 1754 farmhouse setting where you'll find a great selection of bedding and bath items, rugs, linens, and unique gifts. *Directions: Rt 23E to Rt 57E, a half mile past the firehouse (20 mins. from Gt. Barrington).*

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Our editorial address is *Monterey News*, P. O. Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245. We invite signed letters, articles, drawings, poetry, and photographs from readers. Please send submissions (e-mail or computer disk if possible) by the 20th of the month before publication, addressed to the Editor. Submissions may also be left in the drop box on the loading dock of the Generaal Store. Send any change of address, or initial request to receive the *News* by mail (free) to same address. We will set up an ad for your Monterey-based business or event, or advertisers may submit a computer formatted ad (pdf, tif, or jpeg format) with graphics. Address requests for advertising rates and further information to the Editor, or telephone us at 413-528-4347 or e-mail montnews@localnet.com.

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Contributions from local artists this month:
Maureen Banner, pp. 7, 11; George Emmons, p. 18;
Bonner McAllester, p. 16.

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